

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A camera, comprising:
 - an eye detection activation element operable by a camera operator to initiate an eye detection mode;
 - an image sensor that is operable to capture image data for a target subject;
 - an image processor adapted to retrieve said image data from said image sensor and operable to convert said image data into a digital image form; and
 - an eye detection component being operable to evaluate said digital image form for said target subject in said eye detection mode and determine whether at least one eye of said target subject is closed.
2. The camera of Claim 1 wherein the eye detection component is further operable to at least one of provide an alert to an operator of said camera or delete said digital image form from said transient memory space when at least one eye of said target subject is closed.
3. The camera of Claim 1 further comprises a data store having a transient memory space, said digital image form stored in said transient memory space by said image processor for evaluation by said eye detection module.

4. The camera of Claim 3 wherein said eye detection module is further operable to delete said digital image form from said transient memory space when at least one eye of said target subject is closed.

5. The camera of Claim 1 further comprises a data store having a permanent memory space, said eye detection component being operable to move said digital image form to said permanent memory space when eyes of said target subject are open.

6. The camera of Claim 1 further comprises a view screen that is operable to display an image of the target subject based on the digital image form.

7. The camera of Claim 1 wherein said eye detection component is operable to present the camera operator with an option to discard the digital image form for the target subject when at least one eye of said target subject is closed and to delete the digital image form from said transient memory space in response to an input delete command received from the camera operator.

8. The camera of Claim 1 further comprises a face detection component that is operable to identify one or more faces in said target subject and partition the digital image form into a plurality of data segments, such that each data segment includes at least a portion of a face, said eye detection component being further operable to evaluate each data segment of the plurality of data segments.

9. A camera, comprising:

an image sensor that is operable to capture image data for a target subject having at least one eye;

a data store having a transient memory space;

an image processor adapted to retrieve said image data from said image sensor, said image processor being operable to convert said image data into a digital image form and to store said digital image form in said transient memory space of said data store; and

an eye detection component operable to evaluate said digital image form residing in said transient memory space and determine whether an eye of said target subject is closed, said eye detection component further operable to at least one of provide an alert to an operator of said camera or delete said digital image form from said transient memory space when at least one eye of said target subject is closed.

10. The camera of Claim 9 wherein said data store further includes a permanent memory space, said eye detection component being operable to move said digital image form from said transient memory space to said permanent memory space when the eyes of said target subject are open.

11. The camera of Claim 9 further comprises a view screen that is operable to display an image of the target subject based on the digital image form.

12. The camera of Claim 9 further comprises a face detection component that is operable to identify one or more faces in said target subject and partition the digital image form into a plurality of data segments, such that each data segment includes at least a portion of a face, said eye detection component being further operable to evaluate each data segment of the plurality of data segments.

13. A method for taking pictures using a digital camera comprising:
capturing image data for a target subject having at least one eye;
evaluating said image data to determine whether said at least one eye is open or closed; and
performing at least one camera operation based upon whether the eyes of the target subject are open or closed.

14. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of capturing image data further comprises activating a shutter mechanism of the camera by a camera operator.

15. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of capturing image data further comprises:

collecting said image data using a image sensor;

converting said image data into a digital image form using said image processor; and

storing said digital image form in a transient memory space accessible to the image processor.

16. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of evaluating said image data further comprises:

detecting one or more faces in said image data:

partitioning said image data into a plurality of data segments, such that each data segment includes a portion of one face;

evaluating each of the data segments to determine whether at least one eye of he target subject is closed.

17. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of performing at least one camera operation further comprises transferring said image data to a permanent memory space when the eyes of the target subject are open.

18. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of performing at least one camera operation further comprises displaying the image data to the camera operator for review.

19. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of performing at least one camera operation further comprises providing an alert to the camera operator when at least one of the eyes of the target subject are closed.

20. The method of Claim 15 wherein the step of performing at least one camera operation further comprises deleting said image data from the transient memory space when at least one of the eyes of the target subject are closed.

21. The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of performing at least one camera operation further comprises performing iris recognition when the eyes of the target subject are open.